DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 310 404 CS 212 053

AUTHOR Dyson, Anne Haas
TITLE "Once-Upon-A-Time" Reconsidered: The Developmental Dialectic between Function and Form. Technical Report No. 36.
INSTITUTION Center for the Study of Writing, Berkeley, CA.; Center for the Study of Writing, Pittsburgh, PA.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Jul 89
NOTE 36p.; Project funded in part by a grant from the Spencer Foundation. Paper presented at the "Mind and Society" Conference (Durham, NH, October 1988).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Case Studies; Creative Development; *Creative Writing; Descriptive Writing; Grade 1; Grade 2; Kindergarten; Magnet Schools; Primary Education; Reader Response; Story Reading; *Student Writing Models; Urban Schools; Writing Improvement; Writing Research; Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS *Childrens Writing; Story Writing

ABSTRACT

A case study traces the evolution of "once-upon-a-time" in a child's classroom story writing, drawing upon data collected in a three-year study of writing development in an urban magnet school. The subject, Mitzi, is observed from kindergarten through second grade. The study assumes that stories are cultural discourse forms that serve multiple functions and that, to internalize those forms, children must transform them into tools that are functional within their own social worlds. It is also assumed that children's discourse forms and functions are in a dialectical relationship: the initially awkward forms children produce may have limited social meaning--but those forms may elicit social responses that imbue them with new functional possibilities and thus lead children to further grappling with forms. In brief, the story forms young children learn from others are not the end products, but the catalysts, of development. (Five figures and one table of data are included; 30 references are attached.) (Author/KEH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED310404

Center for the Study of Writing

Technical Report No. 36

"ONCE-UPON-A-TIME" RECONSIDERED: THE DEVELOPMENTAL DIALECTIC BETWEEN FUNCTION AND FORM

Anne Haas Dyson

July, 1989

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

University of California, Berkeley
Carnegie Mellon University

CS 213053

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WRITING

Technical Report No. 36

"ONCE-UPON-A-TIME" RECONSIDERED: THE DEVELOPMENTAL DIALECTIC BETWEEN FUNCTION AND FORM

Anne Haas Dyson

July, 1989

Paper prepared for "Mind and Society," a conference sponsored by the English Department of the University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, October 1988.

To appear in *Written Communication.*

University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720

Carnegie Mellon University
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

The project presented, or reported herein, was performed pursuant to a grant from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement/Department of Education (OERI/ED) for the Center for the Study of Writing. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the OERI/ED and no official endorsement by the OERI/ED should be inferred.

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WRITING

Director	Sarah Warshauer Freedman, *University of California, Berkeley*
Co-Directors	Linda Flower, *Carnegie Mellon University* James Gray, *University of California, Berkeley* J.R. Hayes, *Carnegie Mellon University*
Academic Coordinator	Sandra Schecter, *University of California, Berkeley*
Editor	Melanie Sperling, *University of California, Berkeley*
Assistant Editor	Andrew Bouman, *University of California, Berkeley*

Publication Review Board

Chair	Kay Losey Fraser, *University of California, Berkeley*
Assistant Chairs	Anne DiPardo, *University of California, Berkeley* Lorraine Higgins, *Carnegie Mellon University* Victoria Stein, *Carnegie Mellon University*
Advisors	Charles Fillmore, *University of California, Berkeley* Jill H. Larkin, *Carnegie Mellon University*

Millie Almy, *University of California, Berkeley*
Carla Asher, *Herbert H. Lehman College of the City University of New York*
Nancie Atwell, *Boothbay Region Elementary School, Boothbay Harbor, ME*
Robert de Beaugrande, *University of Florida*
Ruby Bernstein, *Northgate High School, Walnut Creek, CA*
Lois Bird, *Whole Language Consultant*
Wayne Booth, *University of Chicago*
Robert Calfee, *Stanford University*
Michael Cole, *University of California, San Diego*
Colette Daiute, *Harvard University*
John Daly, *University of Texas, Austin*
Peter Elbow, *State University of New York, Stony Brook*
JoAnne T. Eresh, *Writing and Speaking Center, Pittsburgh, PA*
Donald Graves, *University of New Hampshire*
Robert Gundlach, *Northwestern University*
James Hahn, *Fairfield High School, Fairfield , CA*
Julie Jensen, *University of Texas, Austin*
Andrea Lunsford, *Ohio State University*
Marian M. Mohr, *Fairfax County Public Schools, Fairfax County, VA*
Lee Odell, *Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute*
Charles Read, *University of Wisconsin*
Victor Rentel, *Ohio State University*
Michael W. Stubbs, *University of London*
Deborah Tannen, *Georgetown University*
Henry Trueba, *University of California, Santa Barbara*
Gordon Wells, *Ontario Institute for Studies in Education*

Abstract

This essay traces the evolution of "once-upon-a-time" in a child's classroom story writing, drawing upon data collected in a three-year study of writing development in an urban magnet school. The developmental literature on young children's literacy has treated story language as a set of structural routines that children learn from being read to, routines that serve the function of representing imaginary worlds. In contrast, this article assumes that stories are cultural discourse forms that serve multiple functions and that, to internalize those forms, children must transform them into tools that are functional within their own social worlds. Moreover, children's discourse forms and functions are in a dialectical relationship: the initially awkward forms children produce may have limited social meaning--but those forms may elicit social responses that imbue them with new functional possibilities and thus lead children to further grappling with forms. In brief, the story forms young children learn from others are not the end products, but the catalysts, of development.

"ONCE-UPON-A-TIME" RECONSIDERED: THE DEVELOPMENTAL DIALECTIC BETWEEN FUNCTION AND FORM

by

Anne Haas Dyson

> Margaret's kindergartners have been beginning most of their journal entries with "This is a . . . ." and then labeling the pictures drawn in their journals. Margaret has decided to try to expand her children's literary horizons. She has spent the last 15 minutes or so brainstorming with the children other possible ways of beginning stories. The children are very responsive--full of ideas, including the ever popular "Once upon a time." So, heartened, Margaret sends them off to work in their journals. She does not hear five-year-old Rena's final response. As Rena sits down at a table with her friends, she announces in a quiet voice, a mischievous grin on her face, "I'm gonna say, 'This is a . . . .'"
>
> "Aaaahh," say the children at the table, clearly sensing trouble ahead.

Margaret, the teacher, was urging her children toward the sort of written language that is valued in schools--written language that is free from the context of pictures and of children pointing with "Thises" and present-time verbs. Instead of "This is a princess," she hoped for "Once upon a time there was a princess"; instead of "This is a house, a mother, and a baby," "A mother and her baby lived in a house." Margaret wanted the children to create dramatic worlds on paper, like the worlds they acted out together in the home center or like the worlds they found in the storybooks she read aloud to them. But, in Rena's present, it was socially more engaging--and definitely more dramatic--to say "This is a"--a mark of an independent thinker.

In this paper, I intend to reconsider "once upon a time" and, more generally, literary language from the children's point of view. And, in doing so, I, like Rena, would like to suggest some contrary points of view. I aim to reconsider, first, ways child writers gain control of story forms; second, the functions of children's story worlds in their real worlds; and, third and most broadly, the connections between form and function in literacy development. To make these points, I will focus on another of Margaret's children, Mitzi. But, first, I set a theoretical backdrop for Mitzi's developmental drama.

Story Boundaries as Mediators between Writers and Readers

To envision this backdrop, consider first "once upon a time." With these words, many stories for and by children invite readers across a boundary, into a pretend, a possible-but-it-isn't-really world. And, as many educators attest, this and other aspects of the literary register are learned from being read to; that is, through book experiences with adults, children learn to construct story worlds. But it seems too simple to treat literary forms only as structural routines learned to serve the function of representing imaginary worlds. For literary forms serve multiple functions, and the construction of those forms is not a static act of representation but a dynamic act of mediation (cf. Franklin, 1983). And it is this multifunctionality--this dynamism--that child writers grapple with in the early school years.

To begin to make sense of this dynamism, consider how tenuous for young children is the line between real and imaginary worlds, a tenuousness reported by developmental psychologists (e.g., Franklin, 1983; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969; Werner, 1957), scholars of children's response to stories (e.g., Applebee, 1978), and observant teachers (e.g., Paley, 1980)--and a tenuousness that can be attested to by anyone who lives daily with a child. Cinderella and Prince Charming may really have lived many years ago, but, as six-year-old Jesse once exclaimed about a present-time prince, "Prince Charles don't even exist." How about Santa Claus--does he really live at the North Pole? Does he live with Eskimos? Do Eskimos have igloos? If they once did, do they now? Time past and time imagined blur. Sometimes, for reasons both cultural and developmental, it is not so easy for children to distinguish between a verbal lie, a verbal mistake, and a verbal imaginary world.[1]

These precarious boundaries exist for all who compose or read fictional worlds. As many literary theorists suggest, the particulars of once-upon-a-time worlds--the one days when something happened to somebody--may be fictional, but they capture the very real if intangible world--often the affective world--that allows common ground for writers and readers (see discussion in Bruner, 1986). Both

---

[1] The term "story" is a deceptively simple one. Children from different cultural communities may have different notions of story, including different notions of how "true" "stories" should be (e.g., Heath, 1983). Developmentally, young children are in the process of learning to tell "stories" according to the rules of their culture. For them, "stories" may be "a lot of talk done by one person" (Lund & Duchan, 1988, p. 178). And, not only in stories but more broadly in their lives, they wrestle with the distinction between "true" and "not true." To complicate matters, in school, anything a child freely writes may be referred to as "your story." In this project, I observed as the children in Margaret's class came to understand the distinction between stories that Margaret herself made--that between stories that were "true" and stories that were "not true."

writers and readers must consistently acknowledge and respect the permeable boundary between the real and the imaginary, or readers might reject an author's premises and close the book, as negotiations break down. So story language does not only serve to represent an imaginary world--it also serves *evaluative* and *social* functions. The particularities of those represented imaginary worlds serve to evaluate--to make some point about--the timeless qualities of real human experience and thus to engage writers and readers socially. Story language mediates between the real and the imaginary, between the writer and the reader.

In the early school years, though, child composers may find writing less central to their social and emotional lives than the more accessible symbolic media of drawing or talk (Dyson, 1989). And any evaluative points they wish to make may be made quite bluntly indeed. An imagined person or event worth commenting on--because it is likeable, detestable, funny, or sad--is apt to be labeled as just that. Litanies of "I like" statements comprising first graders' written texts are familiar to many a primary teacher.

Child composers gradually develop the discourse devices that allow their readers to, in Rosenblatt's (1982) sense, enter into and aesthetically live through a "once-upon-a-time" experience from the author's perspective (Dixon & Stratta, 1986). Composers complicate both narrative structure and syntactic complexity as they highlight the perceived quality of events by portraying their details, and it is these details that bring authors and audience together in an imagined and emotionally felt place. Many of the discourse strategies oral storytellers use to reveal evaluations of personal experience (Labov, 1972; Labov & Waletsky, 1967) are used too by fictional story writers (Tannen, 1988). For example, story creators may intensify the characteristics of people and actions (e.g., through attributive adjectives), manipulate time (e.g., through progressive verbs, adverbial clauses), or compare the reported events to those possible (e.g., through negative statements about what did not occur).

To understand the social roots of such literary developments, Vygotskian-inspired scholars stress the interaction between adults and children; the young are guided by their elders in the use of discourse forms they will eventually use on their own (Vygotsky, 1978; for a discussion of these approaches, see Teale, 1984). The current essay, also focused on the social nature of children's literacy growth, stresses that children do not develop a literary perspective only by using alone language forms used with adults. Rather, children's developing ability to deliberately structure dramas inside text boundaries is related to their developing sense of how stories function in the social dramas they enact outside those boundaries. And, for Margaret's children, these dramas were the stuff of their daily lives together in school. That is, the children came to see how the details of stories--these potential "lies"--could be deliberately manipulated for evaluative and social purposes.

The Setting and Characters

During a longitudinal study in Margaret's classroom, I observed as children discovered the multifunctional nature of stories. Margaret's classroom was in an urban primary school, a magnet school that drew children from across an ethnically and socially diverse district. Margaret taught all the children in the primary school language arts, and they all--kindergartners through third graders--had journals in which they drew and wrote, and, in the kindergarten, dictated. And, while Margaret did allow the children opportunities to formally share their writing, she also allowed them ongoing access to one another during journal time--she allowed them to talk. And it is this talk inspired by, influenced by, but not managed by, Margaret that I focus on here. For it was through this talk that the children learned of the dynamic role of stories in ongoing human relationships. (For a discussion of Margaret's instructional style, see Dyson, 1989.)

In Margaret's classroom, "Once-upon-a-time" *was* initially a routine. And children's early story *writing* did serve primarily to represent an imaginary world or to comment on a world represented in their pictures (Dyson, 1988, 1989); indeed, in the opening anecdote, Margaret was concerned about just these textual comments on pictures--the children's "This-is-a's." And yet, the children's *drawing and its surrounding talk* could serve social, evaluative, and even expository functions. Children might, for example, engage in dramatic play with their friends during drawing, or they might argue about the niceness or, indeed, the sensibleness of each other's pictures or oral stories. Talk about writing, on the other hand, tended to be about spelling and other mechanical features, like length.

But, in time, the content-related talk surrounding drawing began to surround writing as well. The children's very vocal struggle with spelling (a struggle that typically involved much rereading of text) often captured others' attention. As peers responded both playfully and critically to the content of their texts (to what they were reading), the children began to sense writing's social and evaluative possibilities. This sensing of new possibilities led children to extend and to analyze their discourse forms--to, in Vygotsky's (1962) terms, deliberately grapple with the "web of meaning" constructed through writing--so that they could make some point, engage someone's attention in a particular way. There was, then, a dialectical relationship between function and form (Vygotksy, 1978), a relationship much more dynamic than the static one captured in that oft-repeated phrase "function before form."

In the following pages, I illustrate one child's developing grasp of the multifunctionality of stories--and, particularly, her use of "once-upon-a-time," one modest marker and catalyst of her growth. This child, Mitzi, was one of the eight case study children I closely studied in Margaret's classroom over a two-year time period. Mitzi is in no way "representative" of the group of children--all of whom had unique ways of composing and interacting. But she, like the children in general, grappled with the developmental challenges of becoming a story writer.

Her challenges were not simply to compose plots with sensible beginnings, middles, and ends. Rather, Mitzi's developmental challenges involved confronting the following questions:

> What is the relationship between the real world and an imaginary one? (That question is intertwined with the next:)
>
> What is the relationship between *particularities* (details) of stories and the *points* (evaluative nature) of stories? In other words, under what social and textual conditions are untrue statements (particularities) not considered lies?

As I will illustrate, in Margaret's classroom, these questions arose as children reacted to one another's texts--as stories came to be mediators among friends. (Since details of data collection and analysis [and a full description of Mitzi as writer and classmate] are available elsewhere [see Dyson, 1988, 1989], I concentrate here on the evolution of "once-upon-a-time" in Mitzi's writing.)

The Case History

Mitzi was a tall, thin child with a low, soft voice and a straightforward manner. Throughout the years of the project, her talk revealed her involvement with her friends and her family--her worries and curiosities about her good friends Sonia, Jenni, and Bessie, her ambivalent feelings about her little brother, her strong if at times defiant attachment to her mother.

The First Grade

In the first grade, though, Mitzi's social life surrounded but was not mediated by her written texts, nor was it mediated by her drawings (which was unusual for Margaret's room). Mitzi's fast-paced formulaic approach to the journal activity did not allow others easy entry into her efforts. In fact, Mitzi's journal entries seemed to serve simulated story functions: they displayed interactions between "I's" and "you's" and included evaluative comments, but the stories themselves were seldom anchored in any observable way to her ongoing social life.

Mitzi began each entry by drawing some combination of little girls, rainbows, clouds, and hearts. Since these were the things she liked to draw, these were the things she wrote about. Mitzi did not begin her texts with "This-is-a"; she used "Once-upon-a-time" instead. So most of her texts began with a variation of "Once-upon-a-time," followed by a label for a drawn figure, and then a proclamation of affection or its lack, as in the following examples:

Once there was a cowboy. I hated the cowboy a lot.
Do You LIke cowboy's? but I like YOu a lot.
Sometimes I LIke The cowboy. TueSdaYs I LiKe The cowboy.
The End [emphasis added; text accompanying a picture of a cowboy]

Once there was a girl.
I like the girl.
I Hate the Girls brother a Lot. The End [text accompanying a picture of a crying little boy and a frowning girl]

Once there was a rainbow fish. Inside was a flower.
I like the fish. [text accompanying a picture of a multicolored fish containing a flower]

Once there are nice rainbows. I like rainbows.
And I Love you. The End [text accompanying a picture of rainbows]

Once there was a baby Rainbow
I like Rainbows. Do You like
Rainbows? The End [text accompanying a picture of a small rainbow]

These texts are simple statements of existence and affection, as were 18 of Mitzi's 22 collected first grade stories. For the other four texts, she at least hinted at a specific happening. These texts began differently, with "Once" or "One day," as in

One day I saw all the firecrackers in the world. I like them all.
And I like Bessie too.

In the first grade, Mitzi never combined "Once-upon-a-time" and "One-day"--she never used particular happenings to flesh out a "Once-upon-a-time" world. Nor did she seem to use the content of these stories to deliberately engage others in her social world. However, the mechanics of her story production--and, particularly, the quickness with which she could produce these stories--certainly did impress her friends. Margaret, however, was less pleased; she wished Mitzi would "think" about her story.

But, during journal time--and especially while engaged in the more comfortable task of drawing--Mitzi did use the content of stories to engage her friends, stories that engaged others by highlighting her feelings about her real world through exaggerations (fictionalizations) of their details. These stories, though, were oral stories that flowed from the ongoing social activity--the ongoing talk. So, spontaneously--unreflectively--Mitzi did make use of the multiple

functions of stories. Interestingly, her oral stories could begin, as did her written ones, with statements of existence and affection--but these emotional statements were pushed into specifics by her inquisitive peers. Listen to the following example:

> The children are working on their journal entries. Mitzi is working on an entry about a pictured little girl under a rainbow. As they work, Margaret worries periodically about whether or not the children "are writing or talking." And indeed, the children are talking. Their conversation has taken many turns, but it has settled on the topic of "fatness." The topic began when Jake claimed to have seen Mitzi's mother, who, he said, was fat. Sonia, who is herself a bit plump, jumped in to defend Mitzi's mother; Sonia explained that Mitzi's mother had just had a baby. "The fatness hasn't went away yet," said Mitzi. Then Sonia started a long episode about whether or not everybody is a "little bit chubby": "If no one was tubby at ALL then they would die but they have some--if you weren't chubby, Mitzi, you would be dead." Mitzi is not the least bit chubby. She disagrees with Sonia and then begins this story:
>
> Mitzi: I know someone who's fat.
>
> Sonia: Fat Albert. (Fat Albert is a cartoon character.)
>
> Johnny: I know. (Johnny thinks Mitzi is referring to him.)
>
> Mitzi: It's my mom's good friend.
> . . . [three dots indicate omitted data]
> I hate her [the girl friend].

Now if Mitzi were writing, this segment of talk could indeed be her text. Rather than "*I know,*" "*Once there was* someone who was fat. She is my mom's good friend. I hate her." But Mitzi went on to flesh out these feelings with specifics, encouraged by her very interested audience. These specifics, however, seemed questionable--and they gave rise to interactive--to peer group--reflections on the nature of the experienced world. So the conversation continued:

> Mitzi: *Once* I had to go to her work. I had to work for her.
>
> Sonia: What did you have to do?
>
> Mitzi: I had to type papers.
>
> Sonia: What did they have to say?

Mitzi: And then people came to me and said, "Can I have one of those pieces of paper?"

Sonia: Mitzi, are you telling a story?

Mitzi: Nope. And I got some money because I gave her the papers which I typed.

Sonia: How much did you get?

Jake: 355 cents?

Mitzi: No.

Sonia: How much? I mean in dollars.

Mitzi: 100. But I already spent them.

Sonia: A 100 dollars. (laughs)

Mitzi: I spent them on a um, on a couch!

Manuel: On a couch? A couch is that expensive?

Mitzi: Yeah. But we gave it away because we needed room for my brother's crib.

Sonia: I thought so.

Manuel: That makes sense.

The developmental question of interest, then, is: How will Mitzi's written stories, like her oral ones, become avenues for social interaction and for reflection on, if not documentation of, real life? From a Vygotskian point of view, the grasping of a new function--a new meaning--is established in social situations (Vygotsky, 1978). Mitzi's written stories, then, will evolve new functions as they are invested with new social energy. And in this classroom, this new social energy will come from the children themselves. That is, it will come from the reactions Mitzi's written texts elicit from her friends, reactions that--like the reactions to her oral stories--reflect the peer group's evolving notions of reasonable, engaging, satisfying stories.

A quick story about a rainbow or a generic little girl would not be likely to engender an intense response from one's peers. But substitute the names of friends

or family members and then even formulaic stories have the capacity to elicit involvement. And so it happened with Mitzi.

Into her formulaic "once-upon-a-time" stories began to appear the names of her real-world peers and references to her mother. (Recall, for example, the "I like Bessie" in Mitzi's firecracker story [see p. 6]). These specific references indeed gave rise to reactions, particularly when reread during the course of encoding. And the reactions served both to begin to separate the text from the picture--to make the content of the text a legitimate object of attention, a focal point for reflection--and to invest it with new functional meanings.

A particularly interesting example of this process occurs with Mitzi and the witch story. In this event, Mitzi labored intensively as she drew a "mean-looking witch." (See Figure 1.) She was quite pleased with the result, remarking that this was her all-time "favorite story." She then began to write:

> Once there was a witch.
> She is my mom.

Jenni and Bessie, who are sitting nearby, attend to Mitzi's rereading of her story:

> Jenni: I have a witch mother.
>
> Mitzi: What?
>
> Jenni: I have a real witch mother. My mother's a friend of a witch.
>
> Mitzi: A bad one?
>
> Jenni: No, a good one/bad one.
> *One time* she came over for a visit and my brother put (her hat?) in his closet. . . .

Mitzi returns to her text. She may be feeling uneasy about referring to her witch as her own mother, for she now writes:

> I love my mom

Bessie and Jenni seem to be having second thoughts about Mitzi's text as well:

> Bessie: You shouldn't share it [with the class].
>
> Mitzi: She's a bad witch. (pointing to her picture)

Figure 1. Mitzi's "mean-looking" witch.

Jenni: Then you're a bad girl.

Perhaps a little girl who writes that her own mother is a witch is a bad child indeed, from Jenni's point of view. Mitzi seems to interpret Jenni's statement similarly:

Mitzi: No, I'm not. I might not even like my mom, or I love my mom.

At this point, Mitzi draws a conversation bubble next to her drawn witch and writes:

I am bad.

(At this point, the reader may begin to wonder who exactly the witch is now. Mitzi herself?)

In this event, Mitzi's apparently imaginary text led her friend Jenni to tell about a specific occurrence in her real world--"my mother's a friend of a witch"--and led both of her friends to pass judgement on Mitzi's own goodness. Her friends thus highlighted for her the tensions inherent in the story--and in any story--those between the real world and the story world, and between the writer and the readers. Mitzi's making her mother a witch conflicted with loving her mother--and made Mitzi's readers (her friends) uncomfortable. Thus her friends infused her apparently formulaic text with social and evaluative meanings, and they thereby demonstrated for Mitzi that her actions as a writer affected and reflected her relationships with others.

Despite Mitzi's consistent combining of "once-there-was" openings, fictional statements, and references to apparently real and present-time others, she herself sometimes objected to the truth quality of other children's journal entries. Indeed, she accused Jake of "lying" in his story when he wrote about seeing a jet shoot the sun. In the second grade, though, Mitzi would become increasingly concerned about her own lying in stories.

The Second Grade

When Mitzi returned to Margaret's classroom in the second grade, the old themes--liking and hating, mothers, friends, and baby brothers--again appeared in her journal and out of it. She did not need to begin writing with the more concrete process of drawing. In her early second-grade texts, she tended to go directly to these significant others, no longer drawing rainbows or girls before writing. Her "once-upon-a-times" were followed by references to herself, friends, and family members. Too, she seemed to want to avoid "lying" in her stories.

For one of her first second-grade texts, Mitzi again wrote a piece about a witch. Mitzi put both herself and her friend Jenni into this witch story. In fact, Jenni was the witch. In this witch story, however, Mitzi made sure that there was a sensible context for the known witch. Her text reported a "true dream."

Mitzi is sitting beside Jenni. She has already written:

> Me and My Dream
>
> I had a dream and My dream was a BiG NiGhtMare and
> This is My NiGhtMare. Once there was a boy.

Mitzi now turns to Jenni:

> Mitzi: Now this is going to be a true dream.
> . . .
> This is a nightmare I once had and the girl was you.
>
> Jenni: Yeah?
>
> Mitzi: And you really hated me.
>
> Jenni: No wonder it's a nightmare.

Here is Mitzi's completed story:

> I had a dream and My dream was a BiG NiGhtMare. and
> This is My NightMare. Once there was a Girl and her name
> was Jenni and she hated Me. But I do not know why. and
> she had a magic bulb. her bulb was a very powerful bulb.
> It was so powerful it turned Me into a Powerful bulb and
> now she has Two Powerfull Bulbs. The one that is Me is
> even Powerfuller than the other one. The End.

As soon as she finishes that text, Mitzi turns to Jenni:

> OK, want me to read this to you? It's very funny.

In her accompanying picture (see Figure 2), Mitzi was even more fanciful than she was in her text, pressing the dream closer, perhaps, to a lie. In the text, Jenni is simply Jenni with a magical bulb; in the picture, Jenni has witch-like nose and hands and is saying "He, He, He"; the bulbs look like crystal balls.

"That's not very nice," said Jenni in response to Mitzi's entry. But this time Mitzi was prepared, "But this is my nightmare!"

Figure 2. Mitzi's nightmare.

In order to meld the imaginary and the real in more comfortable ways without the use of dreams or magic (another popular element of second grade stories in this class), authors contextualize the essence of a real experience in an imaginary one. And, as suggested by her dream text, Mitzi was beginning to do this; strong emotions were not only stated, but were also embedded in the dream. (The Jenni-who-hated-her turned her into a bulb.) Yet, Mitzi seemed increasingly uncomfortable with the tension between the imaginary and the real, perhaps because of her use of real-world characters. For two months, she abandoned written imaginary worlds--although she did not abandon "once-upon-a-time."

For example, consider the following two texts, the first written in the first grade, the next, in the second grade:

> Once There was a girl. I like the girl. I Hate the Girls Brother a Lot. The End.

> Me and My BaBy Brother
>
> Once upon a time there was a girl Which is Me. I had a little brother. My brother is very bad some times. Some times I love him but not always. The End.

Mitzi's first and second grade texts are very similar. But in the second grade, it is not any girl whom she likes and whose brother she hates. She herself is the girl, and her own brother is the object of her wavering affections. Her text captures her theme of the ambivalence of love, but her picture, drawn after her text, particularizes that psychic truth into a time and place. Indeed, she provided space for her character's own voice: her brother, in his crib, is crying for time from that most valued other--Mommy (see Figure 3). Of course, to create a fictional written world, it is those particularities which must not only find their way into words but which must also take on new identities and, ultimately, create their own dynamics, their own story, reflecting the complexity of human relationships.

Sometimes Mitzi's texts in this real-world period contained particularities--"one days"--but not "once-upon-a-times." For example, after her brother-in-the-crib story, she wrote a piece about a fun day:

> Me and My Mom and
>
> *One day* me and mom and * went for a walk. It was fun because my brother Was not with us. We went to San francisco Zoo.

Figure 3. Mitzi's baby brother.

(*Mitzi had erased "dad" from here as she remembered that he had not gone.)

Soon, though, Mitzi began to put "once upon a time" and "one day" together. That is, she began to use the language routines of story writers (and tellers) to clearly negotiate movement between "once-upon-a-time" states of being and the "one-day" particular actions that energized those states, a movement she first made, in school, in social talk with her friends. And, in fact, it seemed to be her friend Jenni who inspired such a textual move. In her very next text after that of the "walk," Mitzi included both the indefinite "Once-upon-a-time" and a more definite "once." This text was about cats, the favorite conversational, and the favorite written, topic of her friend Jenni:

Cat's by Mitzi

Once there Was a gang of cat's that was Mean. I hate those cat's. *Once* one of them almost killed Me. It was so scary I almost fainted. My MoM came runing out side, and she almost fainted too. The End

As soon as she finished writing, Mitzi turned to Jenni: "Jenni, you're gonna like this one." Given Jenni's attraction to cats--and Mitzi's attraction to Jenni--Mitzi was justifiably confident that Jenni would enjoy hearing of the particularities of her cat experience. In fact, in the second grade Mitzi incorporated both general statements (i.e., statements of affection and existence) and specific occurrences (i.e., events) in a third of her journal entries (see Table 1).

Although Mitzi's gang-of-cats story was supposedly true, it seemed exaggerated. And Mitzi's picture was not entirely realistic--her mother and she are dressed in costumes from the "once-upon-a-time" past. Her mother is saying, "That was a close one," as she and Mitzi look at three quite innocent-looking cats. (See Figure 4.) Still, Mitzi seemed to be in temporary retreat from her grappling with the textual connection between real relationships and inspired imaginary ones. But Mitzi could not long avoid this issue.

Almost daily, Mitzi listened to her friend Jenni write lies. Jenni wrote stories about "my cat," stories Jenni claimed "really did happen." There was just one problem with that claim. Jenni did not have a cat. She wasn't allowed to, as Mitzi knew.

Mitzi: You shouldn't have one 'cause your dad is allergic to them.

Jenni: I know. So what--Ian [Jenni's twin brother] said we can keep the cat in the closet all day.

Table 1: General Statements and Specific Events in Mitzi's Products

	Grade			
Nature of Products	*Grade 1*		*Grade 2*	
General statements of existence and affection	82%	(18)	29%	(5)
Specific occurrences	18%	(4)	35%	(6)
A combination of general and specific	0%	(0)	35%	(6)
Total products		22		17

After two months of writing apparently true stories--and talking about Jenni's lies with her, Mitzi herself finally wrote a deliberate lie. And, just as Mitzi had seemed to use "once upon a time" and "once" to structurally differentiate and resolve the relationship between qualities of existence and particularities of events, she began to deliberately manipulate the openings of her text and to comment on the relationship between the real and the imaginary. Mitzi's return to written imaginary worlds--and her first deliberately marked textual "lie"--seemed related to an upsetting classroom event.

The children had been working hard on a surprise book for Rebecca, the retiring reading teacher. The book was a secret--until first Alexander and, then, Rachel told Rebecca about the coming surprise:

> On this day, Mitzi, Jenni, and Jenni's twin Ian are discussing the telling of the secret:
>
> Ian: Rachel knew that Alexander told, so she told her, Rebecca, and she already knew that Rebecca knew.

Figure 4. Mitzi's close encounter with cats.

Mitzi: Mm mmm. But she knew that they were gonna get Rebecca to not know that--she knew that they were gonna get her to not know that, the real surprise.

. . .

Ian: I hate Alexander for what he did.

Mitzi: I hate Rachel for doing it, cause she did it too.

This theme of secrets and their potential betrayal appeared in Mitzi's piece, entitled "How My Life Was." The story featured Mitzi and a twin sister (as noted above, in real life, her friend Jenni had a twin brother--Mitzi herself had only one brother, the infamous "baby"). This twin sister seemed to be intent on repeating Alexander's and Rachel's misdeed:

How My Life Was

I said to my sister one day that I was going to run away. My sister screamed, "Oh no." My mother and father ran down the stairs. "What happened" they said. My sister was beginning to say that I was going to run away When I ran across the room and covered her Mouth. The End.

So Mitzi was no longer retreating from imaginative texts. But this text did not begin with a variation of "Once upon a time." Above the piece, though, in small letters, Mitzi had written "not true." Perhaps she anticipated some objection from her peers about the truthfulness of the reported "one day," particularly since everyone knew that she did not have a sister. That is, perhaps she wanted her peers to know that she wasn't trying to tell a lie.

Mitzi's "one day" was fleshed out in a more elaborate way than in any of her previous texts. She was not simply representing an imaginary world, nor was she reporting a personal experience or commenting on a picture. As in the case histories of other children, Mitzi deliberately entered her imagined world, drawing upon her own experiences to become an actor in words just as she was an actor in the home center (for a general analysis of the case study children's use of differing stances, see Dyson, 1988). And, as in the home center, her friends seemed to be in this world with her, in the guise of "her sister," and Mitzi directed their play from her knowing vantage point.

Not only was there no "once upon a time" in Mitzi's "secret" text, there also was no bold statement like "I hate her for almost doing that." The evaluation was now in the very grammar of her text. That is, as Mitzi played out the scene, her negative evaluation unfolded grammatically; she slowed down the narrative's

pace with a progressive verb--"My sister was beginning to say"--and then added an adverbial clause to depict her own quick action in this frozen moment--"when I ran across the room and covered her mouth." Indeed, Mitzi's text pictures the event, including the affective quality of that event, much more vividly than the picture itself, which is of quite a peaceful scene--she and her sister sitting sweetly on the couch, as her parents stand nearby. (See Figure 5.) It is not that her choice of grammatical structures was deliberate--but that her acting through the scene *was*; she was engaged in "the deliberate structuring of the web of meaning" (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 100).

Mitzi continued for the next month to mark her imaginative stories "not true." Nonetheless, she was now both more flexible and more conventional about openings and about her texts in general. She began her imaginative texts in varied ways and, also, consistently wrote them in past tense. Further, she no longer began true written texts about friends or family with "once there was."

At the end of the second grade, then, Mitzi seemed aware that imaginary worlds conveyed some essence of the real world--a person with secrets could be vulnerable in both sorts of worlds. Moreover, through a fictionalized world, Mitzi knew she could deliberately take action in her ongoing social world. Thus, she made connections with others in more complex ways than, for instance, writing "I like you." Incorporating a peer as a character in her story, revealing the thoughts and feelings of her characters, or choosing a topic well-liked by another were all ways of reaching out to friends. The particularities of imaginary worlds could both distance one from the real world and bring self and others closer together within it.

The Developmental Dialectic between Function and Form

Why did these changes in Mitzi's storying come about? In our attempts to answer this question about the work of many young children, we have tended to concentrate on the development of structure--and we have left out the human drama being manipulated within and outside of that structure. And thus the developmental drama itself has been oversimplified. In this essay, through the analysis of Mitzi's case history, I have offered a reconsideration of how children gain control of story forms, of the function of story forms in children's lives, and, more broadly, of the nature of the developmental relationship between form and function.

To begin, then, how do children acquire story language? Children may initially "learn" discourse features because they have been read to and because they have read books with adults. And, as earlier noted, Vygotskian-inspired scholars have emphasized the interaction between adult and child in such learning. And yet there can be no true interaction--no dialogue--between adult and child if all the knowledge is seen in the mind of the adult, while the child is viewed as

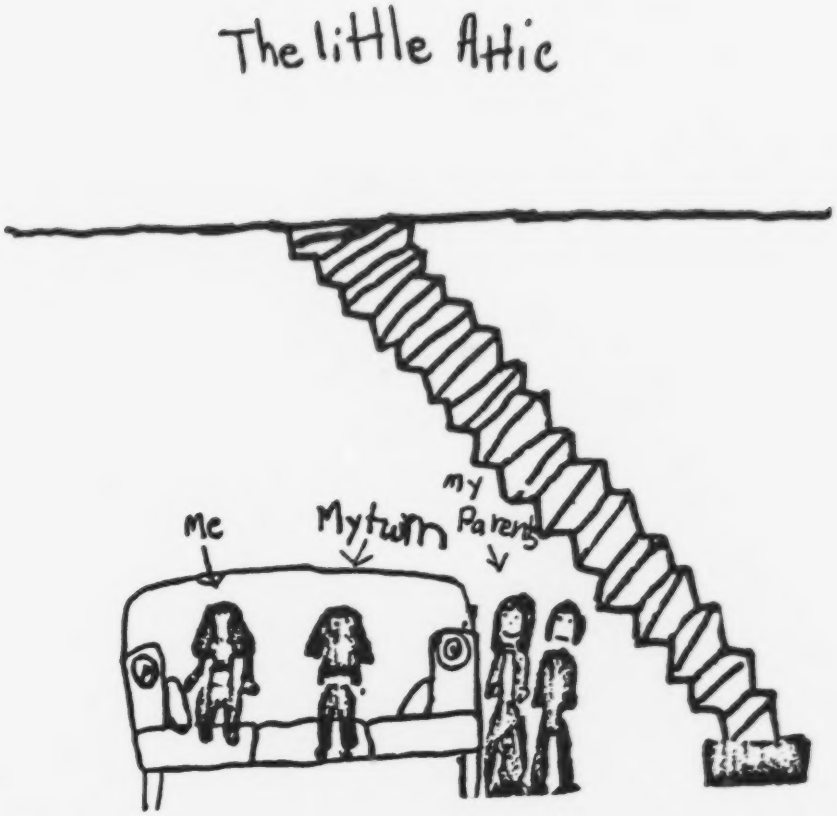

Figure 5. Mitzi and her twin after the threatened betrayal.

only *coming to know*. Vygotsky (1962, 1978) himself portrayed children as knowing too; their knowing is gradually transformed--developed. So children must analyze the discourse features they "learn" from others and incorporate them into their evolving understanding of what it means to compose a story, just as they gradually analyze and reconstruct most features of their language into an increasingly more useful, powerful system (Lindfors, 1987).

Thus, in the presented case history, Mitzi's discourse stories evolved, as their basic structure was repeated and, over time, varied. Her "once-upon-a-times" initially framed her likes and hates, while "one-days" framed particular events. Gradually, "once-upon-a-time" and "one-day" became manipulable boundary setters Mitzi could use to negotiate between qualities of existence and feeling and details of events. This process of structural pattern and variation, one observed in many areas of symbol development (Smith, 1983), may have helped Mitzi to consolidate her discourse actions--experience control over them--and thus form a basis for further development, that is, for the reorganization of her actions.

Yet, just as a focus on adults' socialization of children into a literary perspective can lead to a deemphasis of children's own active sense-making, a focus on the transformations of children's text structures (e.g., Bartlett, 1981) can lead to a deemphasis of the social activity stimulating and guiding this sense-making. For, as Mitzi illustrated, changes in children's story composing are interrelated with changes in their conceptions of the functions fulfilled by those stories. That is, discourse features, like "once upon a time" and "one day," may become subject to and catalysts of children's deliberations about the nature of text worlds, the relationship of textual to lived worlds, and their own role in these worlds. And, for school children, the lived worlds of importance certainly include those they share with their friends.

We come, then, to the second question of concern here; that is, what functions in children's lives do their own written stories serve? In Mitzi's case, as in those of her closely observed peers, child written stories served representative functions, but they were not initially used to mediate relationships with others. Peer interaction and reflection about their lives together happened around the writing, cued in some cases by pictures--but not spontaneously by texts. To become mediators, Mitzi's stories had to figure into the social life growing up during journal time. And so they did; Mitzi's relationships with others imbued her stories with social and evaluative meanings.

Grappling with these functional meanings was not separate from but intimately connected with figuring out discourse forms. For, as discussed in the introduction to this essay, these functions are served as writers play with discourse boundaries; authors highlight their feelings about the experienced world through manipulating its details and, through these details, eliciting readers' own feelings, thereby inviting them to share in the construction of the imaginary world. "The reader's mind is the author's box of paints" (Burt, cited in Britton, 1970, p. 116).

Indeed, both learning to read and to produce fiction involve understanding how to negotiate boundaries between the experienced and the imagined world.

Mitzi explored this complex boundary negotiation in very literal ways. Indeed, that is the value of her case. The complex and abstract language of the literary theorist became daily dramas in the life of a child worrying about her own and others' lying in stories, worries reflected in manipulations of markers like "once-upon-a-time" and "not true." These manipulations involved bringing her own emotion-filled experiences into her texts; "once-upon-a-time" moved from framing a detestable little brother not her own, to framing one very much her own, to framing an event involving an imaginary sister who was also the subject of wavering emotional reactions.

This playing with--transforming of--experiences to highlight feelings is the essence of the evaluative function of fiction. Britton addresses this function in his discussion of the "spectator" role adopted by the story composer; he writes:

> Harding has suggested that a spectator uses his freedom from the demands of participation for the purpose of evaluating experiences, and we have seen that this includes commitment to, and modification of, emotional responses. . . . To say that a spectator is able to "savour feeling as feeling" is to claim that he is more aware of its *quality* as feeling. Let us go further now and see that this awareness enables him, as he looks back, to perceive the sequence and arrangement of feelings--the relation for example of fear to anger and anger to pride. . . . (1970, pp. 112, 113)

And later on, discussing story reading, Britton continues the theme:

> Remember that in all this re-interpretation and modification, we are primarily involved with organization according to "the way I feel about things." Evaluation is central to the process. Our enjoyment of the stories of other men's lives cannot be explained simply in terms of knowing but must always have a strong element of feeling--including, "How would I have felt if that had been me." (p. 118)

Of course, children first deliberately rework experiences in play. And, in the second grade, Mitzi's own attitude toward others while composing, like that of her closely observed peers, was often quite playful, as, for example, when Jenni became a wicked witch. It is play with one's friends, not reading with an adult, that most vividly prefigures the social function of fiction, the active transformations and collaborative--transactional--coming together of writers and readers, who, together, reflect upon and, perhaps, re-evaluate their feelings about themselves and others. To return one final time to Britton,

> The kind of reorganization of the total . . . will be predominantly re-evaluation, a modification of the way our feelings are organized. Hence the importance of the opportunity to savour feeling, of the attention to the formal arrangement of feelings, and of a use of language (as for example in poetry) in which feeling is expressed by the manipulation of linguistic forms. (p. 120)

With his comments on manipulating forms, Britton leads to the last and broadest issue, the one implicit throughout this discussion: what is the developmental relationship between function and form?

As already noted, in the literature on literacy development, function is viewed primarily as a precursor to form. If function is assumed, given a "meaningful" literacy environment (as judged by an adult), and form considered an inappropriate focus of intense direct instruction, then guiding children through process is what remains for a teacher to do. And, indeed, the "scaffolding" of process, whether of writing or reading, has been the major concern of the pedagogical writing literature, particularly that undergirded by Vygotskian theory.

And yet, in Vygotsky's words, children's knowledge of a system, like that of written language, acquires new features because of "changes in interfunctional connections and relationships" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 299). So, in the case of written language development, children's ways of writing change as children begin to sense new functional possibilities in their activity, functional possibilities that were previously fulfilled through other means, including drawing, playing, and talking. Children's sense of what can be accomplished through writing evolves as others respond, both playfully and critically, to their efforts. New ways of writing engender new responses--which in turn engenders the discovery of new functional possibilities for writing.

This dialectical relationship between function and form suggests that, for young school children, the critical talk during the writing process is not only talk with or modeled after that with adults (for a discussion of such talk, see Sowers, 1985). As important may be spontaneous talk among friends about their lives, talk that may infuse their writing (for elaboration of this idea, see Dyson, 1987; for a moving discussion of how a teacher can promote such infusion, see McLeod, 1986). That is, the dialectic is not only between function and form but, more broadly, between the individual and the social group within which that individual's writing figures.

Further, this gradual evolution of a literary perspective, with initial forms gradually acquiring increased functional power, should make us skeptical of references to very young children, including middle class and well-read-to children, as controlling such a perspective. A well-known example of this is the Scollons' (1981) description of their two-year-old daughter as "literate," a label they justify by analyzing the discourse features of her oral stories. Certainly children's

grappling with the boundaries between the real and the imaginary will be influenced by cultural expectations for stories (Heath, 1983); indeed, some parents worry that children will "go from an imaginary story to a downright lie--because there's not much difference between the two" (Dunn, 1980, p. 202). But becoming reflective about these boundary negotiations is a developmental task for all children, including middle class children (Applebee, 1978). As Mitzi illustrated, the process of deliberately forming written worlds, a process quite different, for young children, than relatively spontaneously telling worlds (Vygotsky 1962), reveals the confusions young writers have about what indeed is a "hypothetical" as distinct from a "real" story world or even from a lie. Viewing two-year-olds as truly controlling the discourse features of written stories seems not only developmentally inappropriate but also potentially harmful. (If some children are "literate" at two, are not others "illiterate" at two?)

Coda

In Mitzi's own classroom, literary forms eventually became a playfully acknowledged part of the children's shared social life. Indeed, even the children's talk--talk unconnected to their journal activity--came to reflect the importance of written stories to their lives together:

> Mitzi, now a third grader, and her peers are discussing the potential viciousness of dogs. Mitzi tells the children at her table about her old dog's best friend--a dog named Ralph:
>
> Mitzi: Ralph bit this old man because this man--old man was trying--they thought that this old man was try--was trying--to break in. He [the old man] was just walking by, and um and then they and then Ralph um happily killed him.
>
> Manuel: What!?
>
> Mitzi: Ralph happily ⌜killed him.
>
> Sonia: ⌞For real?
>
> Mitzi: So, um, he killed um--he killed, um--sued my mother--he [the old man, who has been resurrected] *tried* to sue my mother, but he didn't get away with it. So, uh--
>
> Manuel: Happy ending?
>
> Mitzi: No, but um--

Group: (giggles)

Manuel: Not being sued.

Mitzi: But, um, but um--the--Ralph, but Ralph did get um--Ralph did have to be given away to, I think, the police.

Mitzi shaped the details of her remembered event into an engaging story. "Ralph happily killed him," she had said to her friends, sounding very literate with her -ly adverb. "Happy ending?" Manuel had inquired, acknowledging with his giggle, as did the group, that this was very funny, to be talking about an oral story the way they talked about their written ones. They were playing with literary language and with the socially accepted boundaries between the real and the imaginary, a play that, in a very real sense, is engaged in by all story readers and writers.

As Mitzi and her peers illustrate, the developmental goal of story writing is not necessarily that children grow up to be novelists, any more than the developmental goal of dramatic play is that children to grow up to be actors. Story writing, like story playing, may help young children figure out who they are in a world of others, to become comfortable envisioning themselves and others in possible worlds. (For a discussion of the social importance of such envisioning, see Greene, 1988.)

In closing, I would like to turn to that wonderful story maker, Eudora Welty (1984). Welty writes that she makes her stories out of "the *whole* fund of my feelings, my responses to the real experiences of my own life, to the relationships that formed and changed it, that I have given most of myself to"--and so it was for Mitzi; her stories came from her loves and hates, the relationships she had given most of herself to. And soon, I think, it will be so for Rena too, with whom I began this essay. Rena will come to elicit "AAAAAHHs" from her friends--to play with shared realities--inside written imagined worlds.

References

Applebee, A. N. (1978). *The child's concept of story: Ages two to seventeen.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Bartlett, E. J. (1981). *Learning to write: Some cognitive and linguistic components.* Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Britton, J. (1970). *Language and learning.* Harmondsworth, England: Penguin.

Bruner, J. (1986). *Actual minds, possible worlds.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Dixon, J., & Stratta, L. (1986). *Writing narrative--and beyond.* Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton Cook.

Dunn, J. (1980). Playing in speech. In L. Michaels & C. Ricks (Eds.), *The state of the language.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Dyson, A. Haas. (1987). The value of "time off task": Young children's spontaneous talk and deliberate text. *Harvard Educational Review, 57,* 396-420.

Dyson, A. Haas. (1988). Negotiating among multiple worlds: The space/time dimensions of young children's composing. *Research in the Teaching of English, 22,* 355-390.

Dyson, A. Haas. (1989). *The multiple worlds of child writers: A study of friends learning to write.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Franklin, M. B. (1983). Play as the creation of imaginary situations. In S. Wapner & B. Kaplan (Eds.), *Toward a holistic developmental psychology.* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Greene, M. (1988). *The dialectic of freedom.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Heath, S. Brice. (1983). *Ways with words: Language, life, and work in communities and classrooms.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Labov, W. (1972). *Language in the inner city.* Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Labov, W., & Waletsky, J. (1967). Narrative analysis: Oral versions of personal experience. In *Essays on the verbal and visual arts, Proceedings of the*

1966 Spring meeting of the American Ethnological Society (pp. 12-44). Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Lindfors, J. (1987). *Children's language and learning*, 2nd edition. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Lund, N. J., & Duchan, J. F. (1988). *Assessing children's language in naturalistic contexts*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

McLeod, A. (1986). Critical literacy: Taking control of our own lives. *Language Arts, 63*, 37-50.

Paley, V. (1980). *Wally's stories*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Piaget, J., & Inhelder, B. (1969). *The psychology of the child.* New York: Basic Books.

Rosenblatt, L. (1982). The literary transaction: Evocation and response. *Theory into Practice, 21*, 268-277.

Scollon, R., & Scollon, S. B. K. (1981). *Narrative, literacy, and face in inter-ethnic communication.* Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Smith, N. R. (1983). *Experience and art.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Sowers, S. (1985). Learning to write in a workshop: A study in grades one through four. In M. Farr (Ed.), *Advances in writing research: Vol l. Children's early writing development.* Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Tannen, D. (1988). Hearing voices in conversation, fiction, and mixed genres. In D. Tannen (Ed.), *Linguistics in context: Connecting observation and understanding* (pp. 89-114). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Teale, W. (1984). Reading to young children: Its significance for literacy development. In H. Goelman, A. A. Oberg, & F. Smith (Eds.), *Awakening to literacy* (pp. 110-121). Exeter, NH: Heinemann.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1962). *Thought and language.* Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1987). Perception and its development in childhood. In L.S. Vygotsky, *Collected works: Vol. 1. Problems of general psychology* (pp. 289-300). New York: Plenum Press.

Welty, E. (1984). *One writer's beginnings*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Werner, H. (1957). *Comparative psychology of mental development*. New York: International Universities Press.

Acknowledgements

I thank Carol Heller and Mary Gardner, my research assistants. I thank also the children's teacher, who provides her children with ample opportunity and support for writing--and thus provides me with ample opportunity to learn about learning to write. Finally, I gratefully acknowledge the helpful feedback provided by the anonymous reviewers of an earlier version of this essay.

Support for this work was provided in part by a seed grant from the Spencer Foundation, distributed by the School of Education, University of California, Berkeley, and by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement/Department of Education (OERI/ED), through the Center for the Study of Writing. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the OERI/ED and no official endorsement by the OERI/ED should be inferred.

NATIONAL ADVISORY PANEL
The Center for the Study of Writing

Chair
Fred Hechinger
The New York Times Foundation

Alonzo Crim
Professor of Urban Educational Leadership
Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA

Sister Regina Noel Dunn
Teacher
Villa Maria Academy, Malvern, PA

Marcia Farr
Associate Professor of English
University of Illinois, Chicago, IL

Abraham Glassman
Chairman
Connecticut State Board of Education

Bill Honig
California Superintendent
of Public Instruction

The Honorable Gary K. Hart
California State Senator

Sibyl Jacobson
Executive Director
Metropolitan Life Foundation

John Maxwell
Exeutive Director
National Council of Teachers of English

Roy Peña
Principal
Andrews High School, El Paso, TX

Carol Tateishi
Teacher
Ross Elementary School, Kentfield, CA

Richard C. Wallace, Jr.
Pittsburgh Superintendent of Schools
and Secretary, Board of Education